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SUBJECT: Tripartite Joint Technical Committee conducts workshop on partnership in humanitarian work

¶1. (U) Summary: The Tripartite Joint Technical Committee (TJTC) facilitated a workshop from October 10 to 12 to encourage cooperation between national and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Workshop results encouraged increased information sharing and openness in NGO partnerships and in the NGO operating environment in Sudan more generally. The workshop anticipates the advent in January 2010 of a policy of "Sudanization" whereby INGOs will be required to work through local partners. End summary.

NGOs, UN, DONORS, GNU DISCUSS NGO PARTNERSHIPS

¶2. (U) From October 10 to 12, the TJTC held a workshop entitled "Developing a More Effective Partnership between Sudanese and International NGOs." The TJTC includes representatives from the Government of National Unity (GNU) Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), international NGOs and U.N. agencies. USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) staff attended the opening session, which focused on brainstorming on ways to enhance future cooperation among participants to provide effective and well-targeted humanitarian aid. A representative of the NGO Steering Committee (SC), speaking for the 72 international NGO members, noted the workshop's timeliness in light of ongoing efforts to create new partnerships between national and international NGOs in Sudan. The SC representative emphasized the important role of Sudanese NGOs in humanitarian assistance in Sudan and welcomed additional donor participation.

¶3. (U) During the opening session, the HAC Commissioner and GNU representative highlighted the fact that 3,200 national NGOs and voluntary agencies currently operate in Sudan, and the HAC would like to see national organizations play an increased role in humanitarian work and long term development in Sudan.

WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

¶4. (U) USAID/OFDA staff also participated in the closing session, which reported on the workshop's progress and conclusions. Workshop recommendations included building trust between national and international NGOs, establishing contractual agreements between NGO partners to encourage transparency and accountability, promoting capacity building, simplifying government procedures or visas and permits for expatriates to facilitate a cooperative operating environment, and establishing a website for information sharing. Workshop participants also emphasized that international NGOs should be able to choose national NGO partners.

15. (SBU) Comment: USAID/OFDA staff view the workshop as important at a sensitive time for humanitarian aid. Following the expulsion of 13 international NGOs in March 2009, President al Beshir announced a policy of "Sudanization" scheduled to take effect in January 2010. The new policy will require all international NGOs to work through local NGO partners, raising many questions about existing partnerships with ministries and churches, as well as the capacity of local NGOs to take on large humanitarian operations. In this context, the workshop might be seen as preparation for the roll-out of the new policy. The workshop was well-attended, and the facilitator encouraged participants to take control of the workshop agenda and recommendations. The workshop's recommendations will likely form the basis for future partnerships between national and international NGOs. End comment.

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